

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

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FOL RPT MANAGUA 316 ACTION SECSTATE 21 JAN.

QUOTE

S E C R E T MANAGUA 0316

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, XK, NU

SUBJECT: SECRETARY KISSINGER'S TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA

REF: STATE 012756, STATE 013815

1. AT THE END OF LONG LUNCHEON FOR OAS SECRETARY GENERAL ORFILA HOSTED BY PRESIDENT SOMOZA ON JANUARY 20TH, THE PRESIDENT INFORMED ME THAT COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT ODUBER HAD CALLED THE DAY BEFORE TO ASK HIM IF HE WAS AVAILABLE TO MEET WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER AND THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS ON FEBRUARY 23RD IN SAN JOSE. PRESIDENT SOMOZA TOLD ME THAT HE AGREED TO ATTEND THE MEETING.

2. PRESIDENT SOMOZA SAID THAT HE SAW NO CONFLICT BETWEEN THE
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MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER IN SAN JOSE AND THE MEETING OF

CENTRAL AMERICAN CHIEFS OF STATE THAT HE PLANNED TO HOST IN NICARAGUA IN FEBRUARY. ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, NO FIRM DATE FOR THE CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING HAD BEEN SET. HOWEVER, HE SUGGESTED TO PRESIDENT ODUBER THAT THE TWO MEETINGS BE HELD CONSECUTIVELY IN SAN JOSE TO AVOID UNNECESSARY TRAVEL FOR HIM AND HIS PRESIDENTIAL COLLEAGUES.

3. SOMOZA EXPRESSED HIS KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT THAT COSTA RICA WAS SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT BY SECRETARY KISSINGER, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF COSTA RICA'S FAILURE TO SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES ON SOME KEY ISSUES AND ITS FLIRTATION WITH CASTRO AND TORRIJOS. HE COMPLAINED THAT LOYAL AND STEADFAST FRIENDS LIKE NICARAGUA WOULD WELCOME BEING ASKED TO HOST SUCH A MEETING BUT ARE BY-PASSED IN FAVOR OF LESS RELIABLE COUNTRIES.

4. I EXPLAINED TO THE PRESIDENT THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER CLEARLY MEANT NO OFFENSE IN SELECTING COSTA RICAS AS THE HOST COUNTRY, THAT COSTA RICA WAS OFTEN CHOSEN BECAUSE OF ITS CENTRAL LOCATION, AND THAT IT WAS ALSO A GOOD FRIEND OF OURS.

5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT SOMOZA IS AS SENSITIVE TO REAL AND IMAGINED SLIGHTS BY THE UNITED STATES AS OTHER LATIN LEADERS, ALTHOUGH HE MAY NOT SHOW IT TO THE SAME EXTENT. AS A CLOSE FRIEND OF OURS, HE FEELS THAT HE DESERVES MORE SOLICITOUS TREATMENT THAN HE SOMETIMES RECEIVES. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO EXAGGERATE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF SYMBOLIC SIGNS OF FRIENDSHIP AND ACCEPTANCE BY THE UNITED STATES. IN THE INTEREST OF MAINTAINING THE EXCELLENT, COOPERATIVE RELATIONS THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE USA AND GON, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF SECRETARY KISSINGER (OR OTHER SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS SUCH AS CABINET OFFICERS OR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS) SCHEDULED A STOPOVER TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT AT NEXT CONVENIENT OPPORTUNITY.

6. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS TO COSTA RICA FOR AMBASSADOR ONLY. THEBERGE

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